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PREFACE.

The present study does not claim to be an addition to human knowledge. One familiar with the writings of travelers and ethnologists on the negroes of West Africa, is acquainted with most of the books out of which the first few chapters have been woven; one acquainted with the history and present condition of the race in the United States, has met most of the statements and arguments embodied in the later portions of the work. The merit of the book, in my judgment, is to be found rather in the fact that it brings together two lines of investigation which have hitherto been kept asunder. The rapidity with which an uncivilized people may be lifted, or may lift themselves, to the plane of an advanced civilization is still undetermined. To realize that many characteristics of the American Negro are part of his inheritance from Africa, and were bred into the race there through long generations, may perhaps strengthen the patience and forbearance of those who seek to expedite his progress. To realize that many faults often attributed to the debasing effects of American slavery, are faults which he shares with his African ancestors and contemporaries, may suggest a juster and more impartial view of the merits and demerits of the economic system which crumbled as a result of the Civil War. That a southern white man, the son of a slave holder, should have selected this subject for investigation, have pursued his work at a northern university, utilizing for the purpose a library, the nucleus of which in this field is a large

anti-slavery collection, and have reached results, the tendency of which seems to me in the main eirenic rather than controversial, is a noteworthy sign of the times, suggesting how both sections and both races are coming more and more to coöperation of effort and harmony of conclusions regarding our great problem. The work of Mr. Tillinghast has given me much light upon a question in which for years I have been interested, and I believe that many others of his readers will share my judgment.

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